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***Manual of
The Southern
Convention***

MANUAL
OF THE
Southern Convention
OF
Congregational Christian
Churches

Containing
Historical Sketch,
Principles, Government and
Orders of Services

Eighth Edition
as
Revised 1960

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CORRESPONDING MEMBERS:

W. E. Wisseman
Wm. T. Scott, Jr.
Rosser Lee Clapp
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BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

The Congregational Churches* were first organized in England in the 16th century in revolt against state control of worship and conscience. They came to America as the Church of the Pilgrim Fathers, and together with the Puritans, who came later, they greatly influenced the founding of the American Republic. Perhaps no Church in America played a larger part in the early history of this country.

There has come an impressive record of "First Things" which Congregationalists have given this country. To mention some of these, to the Congregational Churches must be credited the first state Constitution (1639), the first college for young men (1636), the first academy for either boys or girls (1636), the first Protestant theological seminary (1808), the first home missionary society (1798), the first foreign missionary society (1810), the first schools for the Negro race (1861) which produced such men as Booker T. Washington, the first Christian Endeavor Society (1881). To this record it should be added that more than forty colleges beginning with Harvard (1636) and Yale (1701), have been established by the Congregational Churches. As the nation expanded westward, Congregational men, women, teachers and ministers were everywhere present and leading. Organizing the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810 and the Congre-



*A capital "C" has been used in this Manual when the term Church refers to the denomination, or the universal society of Christ's followers.

A small "c" has been used when the reference is to the local church except in cases of titles.

gational Home Missionary Society in 1826, the Congregationalists have been leaders in missions.

The Christian Church grew out of three simultaneous movements led by stalwart, forward looking ministers — in Virginia and North Carolina in 1792 under James O'Kelly, in New England in 1801 under Abner Jones and Elias Smith, in Kentucky under Barton W. Stone in 1804. The first Christian Church organized in the South was O'Kelly's Chapel, in Chat-ham County, N. C., in 1794 and named in honor of James O'Kelly. The Christian Church was the first American denomination to grow up out of the soil of the new American Republic. Its strength was chiefly in North Carolina, Virginia, the Middle West and New England, though early after 1800 its churches were organized in Alabama and Georgia. In North Carolina and Virginia, there arose immediately following the War between the States the Afro-Christian Convention.

Under the leadership of Horace Mann, the Christian Church founded Antioch College in Ohio, in 1852, which was one of the first colleges to open its doors to men and women on an equal basis. The Christians established in 1808 the first religious Journal, *The Herald of Gospel Liberty*, which merged with *Advance* in 1931. In 1957, the *Advance* merged with the *Evangelical and Reformed Church Messenger* to form the *United Church Herald*.

Beginning with James O'Kelly's movement in Virginia and North Carolina in 1792, the "Christian Church" has contributed to the development of the free Church in the South. Prior to the merger between the Congregational and Christian Churches in 1931 there were more than 400 of these Christian Churches in the South. Elon College, founded in 1889, and

The **Christian Sun**, their Church paper, established in 1844, not only strengthened these churches but made their contributions in the fields of Christian education and journalism.

The early organization of the Christian Church in the South consisted mainly of "local" conferences and "general meetings." This simple organization continued with varying success until 1847, when the "Southern Christian Association" was organized. The "Southern Christian Association" gave place to the "Southern Christian Convention" in 1856. This organizational meeting of the Southern Convention was held at Union "Chapel" (now Union Ridge), Burlington, N. C. At this meeting the polity of the Church was thoroughly discussed and reviewed, and a declaration was made to adhere strictly and firmly to the Principles and Government originally adopted by the founders of the Christian Church. Brief outlines of organizations of different departments of church government were prepared and received. The first regular session of the Convention was held at Cypress Chapel, Nansemond County, Virginia, in May, 1858. At this session the educational, publishing, and missionary interests of the Church were discussed and provided for.

The Eastern Virginia Conference was organized in 1818; the N. C. and Virginia Conference in 1825; the Virginia Valley Conference in 1838; the Deep River Conference (now W. N. C. Conference) in 1864; and Eastern N. C. Conference was formed in 1894 from the N. C. and Virginia and Deep River Conferences.

During the War between the States, the Christian Church in the South suffered great losses. Only one conference (North Carolina Conference) continued its

annual meeting during the war. In 1866 the shattered forces gathered in a Convention session at Mt. Auburn Christian Church in Warren County, North Carolina. Here means were provided for reviving **The Christian Sun**, and the publication of a hymnal. The Principles and Government of the Church were reduced from a verbal to a written state and were ratified in a special session of the Convention at Mt. Auburn Church, Warren County, N. C. in 1867. Since that time seven revisions have been printed, and this present edition (the eighth) was authorized by the Convention in 1960.

Among the more important organizational changes and developments in the Southern Convention since 1900 have been the authorization and founding of the Christian Orphanage in 1902 (first child admitted in 1907), (now the Congregational Christian Home for children); the growth of the missionary program, including the organization of the Women's Work in 1906 and the organization of the Women's Missionary Convention in 1913 (now the Women's Fellowship) as an auxiliary of the Southern Convention; the employment of a Mission Secretary in 1916; the promotion of Young Peoples' work (in 1896 the Convention formally adopted the program of the Society of Christian Endeavor), with Christian Endeavor made an auxiliary of the Convention in 1908, later expanded into the "Sunday School and Christian Endeavor Convention" and finally the Youth work of the Convention being associated with the National Pilgrim Fellowship of the Congregational Christian Churches; the development of the apportionment plan for financing the enterprises of the Conferences, Convention and denomination at home and abroad; the employment of a Promotional Secretary in 1938 (title changed to Superintendent in 1944) with

duties outlined as servant of the churches, conferences, boards, institutions and the Convention; the establishment of a Convention office and central treasury; the organization of the Laymen's Fellowship as an auxiliary of the Convention in 1947; the acquisition in 1950 of "Moonelon" as the Convention Assembly Ground, near Elon College, N. C.; in 1952 the provision for employment of a Secretary of Stewardship and Evangelism, succeeded by an Associate Superintendent in 1958; and in 1957 the provision for employment of a Minister of Christian Education, though Field Secretaries of Religious Education were employed prior to that date.

Serving as Superintendents of the Southern Convention have been Dr. F. C. Lester (Promotional Secretary 1938-44), 1944-46; Dr. William T. Scott, 1946-1960; and Rev. Clyde L. Fields, who was elected in 1960. Dr. J. O. Atkinson served as Mission Secretary from 1916 until his death in 1940.

The Congregational and Christian denominations had long preached Christian union, and in 1931 merged their forces because of their common belief in liberty of conscience, freedom from ecclesiastical and state control of religion, and their desire for the union of all Christ's followers. Today these churches extend into every state of the union and into many nations of the world.

Some Things Generally Believed Among Congregational Christian Churches:

1. We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, goodness, and love.
2. We believe in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord and Saviour, who for us and our salvation lived and died and rose again and liveth ever more.

3. We believe in the Holy Spirit, who taketh the things of Christ and revealeth them unto us, renewing, comforting, and inspiring the souls of men.
4. We believe the Holy Bible is a sufficient rule of faith and practice. We are united in striving to know the will of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known unto us. The right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience is a duty and a privilege that should be accorded to and exercised by all.
5. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church; Christian character is a sufficient test of fellowship and of church membership.
6. We believe it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the gospel to all mankind by exalting the worship of the one true God and laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the realization of human brotherhood.
7. We believe in the Union of all the followers of Christ, that they may be one even as Christ prayed.
8. We look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting.
9. The Congregational Christian Churches maintain a continuity with the Church of the Ages and desire order, dignity, and beauty in their worship.
10. We believe the Church should call men directly and forcefully to repentance of sin, and to the

acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

11. We urge men everywhere to make the most of their opportunities for soul culture and the development of character by reading the Scriptures, prayer and meditation, regular attendance upon church services and by giving themselves in unselfish service for their fellowmen.
12. We believe in the freedom and responsibility of the individual soul, the right of private judgment in faith, polity, and fellowship, which are in keeping with the basic principles of democracy.
13. We believe that the candidate for church membership should have the right to be baptized as he may desire, choosing any one of the historic modes. Christian baptism is an act of consecration and witness to the world that he has accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior and Guide.
14. We encourage the establishing and maintenance of the Christian home and the Christian nurture of children that they may increase in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. We welcome believing parents who bring their children to Christ for baptism and dedication.
15. We believe in the progressive revelation of God through the Scriptures, through nature, and through human personalities. The test of such revelation in human experience is a consistent Christian life.
16. We believe in an open communion and invite all Christians to partake of the Lord's Supper.
17. We believe that such a Church will be a spiritual Church with Christ its only Head and all members brethren.

A second union was effected in 1957, when the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical & Reformed Church formed the **UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**, following negotiations of nearly 20 years. The basic documents of the union are the **Basis of Union with Interpretations** and the resulting **Constitution of the UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**, both of which reaffirm the autonomy of the local church:

"The autonomy of the local church is inherent and modifiable only by its own action. Nothing in this Constitution and the By-Laws of the United Church of Christ shall destroy or limit the right of each local church to continue to operate in the way customary to it; nor shall be construed as giving to the General Synod, or to any Conference or Association, now or at any future time, the power to abridge or impair the autonomy of any local church in the management of its own affairs, which affairs include, but are not limited to, the right to retain or adopt its own methods of organization, worship and education; to retain or secure its own charter and name; to adopt its own constitution and by-laws; to formulate its own covenants and confessions of faith; to admit members in its own way and to provide for their discipline or dismissal; to call or dismiss its pastor or pastors by such procedure as it shall determine; to acquire, own, manage and dispose of property and funds; to control its own benevolences; and to withdraw by its own decision from the United Church of Christ at any time without forfeiture of ownership or control of any real or personal property owned by it." (Paragraph 21, page 7, Article IV of Constitution.)

The provisions contained in the Constitution "define

and regulate the General Synod and those instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ which are recognized, established by or responsible to the General Synod, and describe the free and voluntary relationships which the local churches, Associations, and Conferences sustain with the General Synod and with each other."

The Conferences (Conventions) and Associations being autonomous bodies, the realignment of their boundaries or composition of membership will be determined by these bodies themselves, with the counsel and confirmation of the General Synod.

In 1960 the Constitution of the United Church of Christ was approved unanimously by its General Synod, which referred it to the Congregational Christian Churches and to the Evangelical and Reformed Synods for approval. The General Synod shall declare this Constitution in force when it shall have been ratified or approved by no less than two-thirds of the Synods of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and by not less than two-thirds of the Congregational Christian churches voting, such voting to have been completed not later than June 1 immediately preceding the next regular meeting of the General Synod after the submission of the Constitution for the action of the Congregational Christian churches and of the Synods of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. (June 1, 1961.)

"Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church unite in the United Church of Christ without break in their respective historical continuities and traditions. The following local churches compose the United Church of Christ:

"a. The local churches of the Evangelical and Reformed Church;

"b. The local churches of the Congregational Christian fellowship which vote to become a part of the United Church of Christ, or which vote to approve this Constitution;

"c. Any Congregational Christian local church which, although it has not voted to become a part of the United Church of Christ, or to approve this Constitution, votes to join the United Church of Christ after this Constitution is declared in force;

"d. Any local church which, after this Constitution is declared in force, may be accepted into an Association, or Conference, of the United Church of Christ;

"e. The local churches of any denomination which in the future unites with the United Church of Christ; and

"f. Any local church in a category not otherwise defined in this article, received upon its request, subject to such provisions as in consultation with the Conference may be specified by the Association within whose bounds it is located, and which are not inconsistent with this Constitution and the By-Laws of the United Church of Christ."

(Paragraphs 11-17, Article IV of the Constitution.)

Wm. T. Scott, Sr.

August 31, 1960.

PART I

PRINCIPLES OF THE CONGREGATIONAL
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF THE
SOUTHERN CONVENTIONChapter I
THE CHURCH

The Church is composed of all who exercise repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21).

The Savior came into the world to establish one Church (Matt. 16:18), the members of which belong to various denominations differing widely in doctrine and government, yet they form but one body, of which Christ is the Head (Col. 1:18).

All the redeemed are brethren (Matt. 23:8), and members of the Church (I Cor. 12:20). The Church is spoken of in the Scriptures as a family (Eph. 2:19), which should not be divided against itself (Mark 3:25; Matt. 12:25).

All the principles, operations (I Cor. 12:6), and officers (Rom. 12:4-8) of the Church ought to harmonize in the administration (I Cor. 12:5) of the Redeemer's Kingdom on earth, to the end that all the members (I Cor. 12:12, 13) may be brought into fellowship (I John 1:3, 6, 7) and communion with one another.

Chapter II

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN
CHURCHES

The Congregational Christian Churches may be composed of any or all who constitute the body of which Christ is the Head (Col. 1:18).

But at present it embraces only a part of those who desire the reformation of the wicked (Isa. 55:7; Matt. 9:13), the spiritual worship of God (John 4:24), and the union of the great Brotherhood of Christians (John 10:16; John 17:11).

It is opposed to contentions and schisms in the body (I Cor. 12:25). Envy, strife, and divisions (I Cor. 3:3, 4) are hurtful to the Church, and antagonistic to the teachings and spirit of Christianity (I Cor. 1:10).

Its purpose is to propagate the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23), and to cultivate brotherly love (I John 4:7).

It fosters the essential doctrines of evangelical Christianity, by which the Church has been established and maintained.

It remands to private judgment the peculiar doctrines and tenets which have confused and divided the Christian world, and hence they cease to be matters of debate, when such debate tends to strife (I Cor. 1:13).

It requires no compromise of faith on the part of any follower of Christ in order to have communion or fellowship (Matt. 23:8; Luke 9:50). In it denominational distinctions cease to exist and Christian love binds the Brotherhood together (I Thess. 4:9).

Its mission will be consummated in the conversion of the world (Psalms 2:8), the union of all the followers of Christ (Eph. 4:13), and His reign in human society.

Chapter III

PRINCIPLES OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

The Scriptures contain an abundance of indisputable (II Tim. 3:16, 17) truth sufficient for the moral guid-

ance and spiritual enlightenment of man, and adapted to the comprehension of all. The Congregational Christian Churches of the Southern Convention, therefore, remand to private judgment those doctrines and tenets which divide the followers of Christ (Gal. 5:15), and take the following Cardinal Principals as the groundwork of organization:

- (1) The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church (Eph. 1:22, 23).
- (2) Christian (Isa. 62:2; Acts 11:26) is a sufficient name for the Church.
- (3) The Holy Bible is a sufficient rule of faith and practice (II Tim. 3:16, 17; Psalm 19:7, 8, 11).
- (4) Christian Character is a sufficient test of fellowship, and of Church membership (Matt. 7:21; John 7:17; Rom. 8:9, 10).
- (5) The right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience is a right and a privilege that should be accorded to and exercised by all (Rom. 14:4, 5, 10, 13; II Tim. 2:15; II Cor. 2:17).

Chapter IV

SENTIMENTS OF THE CHURCH

All sentiments and opinions of the Church should be expressed, as nearly as possible, in Scriptural language, as least likely to be misunderstood or to give offense. Besides, no great error is likely to be imbibed, or propagated, while all strictly adhere to the law and to the testimony (II Tim. 3:16, 17).

If any one should find too little in these sentiments of the Church to answer all his inquiries on the points mentioned, it is because his inquiries into the Scriptures have been inadequate (Isa. 8:20).

SECTION I

God

It is safe to teach the following, since it is Scriptural:

All knowledge of God in this life must necessarily be very imperfect (John 11:7; Rom. 11:33 and 34). Therefore great care should be exercised in all expressions which have any allusions to the Almighty (Ex. 20:7; Psalms 99:5), and only those terms should be used which are found in the Holy Scriptures.

There is only one living and true God (I Cor. 8:4), unchangeable (Mal. 3:6), incomprehensible (Psa. 145:3), who inhabiteth eternity (Isa. 57:15), whose years are throughout all generations (Psa. 102:24), who is from everlasting to everlasting (Psa. 90:2), the Creator of all things (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11), the Preserver of life (Psa. 36:6; Acts 17:28), only wise (Rom. 16:27), just (Isa. 45:21), holy (Isa. 5:3), full of love (I John 4:8), and compassion (Lam. 3:22), gracious, merciful, long-suffering; abundant in goodness and truth; forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin (Ex. 34:6, 7); the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him (Heb. 11:6); yet terrible in his doings (Psa. 66:5); visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate him (Ex. 20:5), and taking vengeance upon them that know him not (II Thes. 1:7, 8).

God is a Spirit (John 4:24), eternal, immortal, invisible (I Tim. 1:17), the only Potentate, the King of kings, the Lord of lords (I Tim. 6:15), of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things (Rom. 11:36); his judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out (Rom. 11:33), and his understanding

is infinite (Psa. 147:5); he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath (Deut. 4:39), to whom we shall give glory forever (I Peter 4:11).

SECTION II

The Son

Avoiding all theological disputations concerning the person and offices of Christ, the Congregational Christian Churches in common with other evangelical churches, hold to the following Scriptural sentiments:

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16); full of grace and truth (John 1:14), the Savior of the world (John 4:42), the Word which was in the beginning with God, and was God, and by whom all things were made (John 1:1-3); who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and who upholds all things by the word of his power (Hebrews 1:3), the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last (Rev. 1:11); God manifest in the flesh (I Tim. 3:16), who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God (Phil. 2:6), one with the Father (John 10:30).

He is the Mediator between God and man (I Tim. 2:5); the Prophet (Acts 3:22), Priest (Heb. 5:6), and King (Rev. 17:14); Head of the Church (Eph. 1:22, 5:23); the Heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2); and Judge of the world (John 5:22).

The Lord Jesus was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and with his stripes we are healed (Isa. 53:5); he bore our sins in his own body (I Peter 2:24); he is our Advocate with the Father (I John 2:1), and makes reconciliation for sin (Heb. 2:17); he died for our sins (I Cor. 15:3), that

we might live with him (I Thess. 5:10); through him we have access to the Father (Eph. 2:18) and peace with God (Romans 5:11); and through his name alone can we be saved (Acts 4:12).

SECTION III

The Holy Spirit

The following statements, attested by Scripture, indicate the character and offices of the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son (John 15:26), as the Comforter whom Christ promised to send unto his disciples, saying that, when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8).

He is the Witness testifying to the Sonship of Christ (Luke 3:22), the Sonship of believers (Rom. 8:16), the Power of the Gospel (Acts 5:32), and the things freely given us of God (I Cor. 2:12).

The Spirit is Guide, leading us into all truth (John 16:13), and by him we are justified and sanctified (I Cor. 6:11).

He is Teacher (Luke 12:12) who searcheth the heart (Rom. 8:27), and not the heart only, but all things, yea the deep things of God, and reveals them unto us (I Cor. 2:10).

SECTION IV

The Holy Bible

The Congregational Christian Churches affirm that the Holy Bible is their only rule of faith and practice, and, therefore, special emphasis should be placed upon it as the Book of supreme authority and counsel.

While the light of nature and the works of creation do very far show the existence, power, and glory of God (Psa. 19:1-3), yet the nature and will of God were never discovered by his works (I Cor. 1:21). He therefore graciously condescended to make known to man, through the Holy Bible, his own nature and will and the mystery that had been kept secret from the foundation of the world (Rom. 16:25).

The Scriptures are given by inspiration of God, and are sufficient for correction and instruction in righteousness, and are designed to make perfect and thoroughly furnish unto all good works (II Tim. 3:16, 17).

No rule of faith, other than the sacred Scriptures, should be imposed upon the Church (Gal. 1:8).

The Word of God is well adapted to our present state (Psa. 107: 20), suited to our comprehensions (Psa. 119: 130), and is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our pathway (Psa. 119:105).

The Scriptures were written by holy men of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:21; II Sam. 23:2), and are designed to give us comfort and hope (Rom. 15:4), and to make us wise unto salvation (II Tim. 3:15).

SECTION V

Repentance and Faith

God hath particularly enjoined all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30), and the Savior hath expressly declared that, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3, 5); but repentance must include conversion (Acts 3:19), and be connected with faith (Mark 1:15; I John 5:1; John 1:12; John 3:3; Acts

20:21), in order to be justified. (Rom. 5:1; Gal. 3:24).

The preaching of repentance was the chief business of the apostles when Christ first sent them forth (Mark 6:12), and it should be the chief business of every Minister of the Gospel now (Luke 24:47), and also to declare the fact that we are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8) in the Lord Jesus (John 11:25, 26).

SECTION VI

Baptism

Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, instituted by the Lord Jesus, and should be perpetuated and strictly observed (Matt. 28:19).

By this solemn ordinance we profess to have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27), and so it is a sign of regeneration and remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and of assurance to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3, 5).

Respecting the mode, or the subject of baptism, every one should be fully persuaded in his own mind (Rom. 14:5).

SECTION VII

The Lord's Supper

The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in his Church in perpetual remembrance of him, showing forth his death till he come (I Cor. 11:23-26).

This sacrament, which is the communion of the blood and body of Christ (I Cor. 10:16), should be given unto, and received by all true followers of our

Lord (I Cor. 10:17); but every one should carefully examine himself that he may not eat and drink unworthily, not discerning the Lord's body (I Cor. 11: 27, 28, 29).

SECTION VIII

Social Action

Social Action is the service of the Church in helping to make the Christian Gospel more effective in society through research, education, and action in local communities, states, regions, the nation and the world (Micah 6:8; Matt. 25:40; Luke 4:18; Jas. 1:27; Is. 58:6-7).

PART II

GOVERNMENT OF THE CONGREGATIONAL
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF THE
SOUTHERN CONVENTIONChapter I
CHURCHES AND MEMBERS

SECTION I

Congregational Christian Churches

In the merger of the Congregational and Christian Churches it is provided that each local church shall have the right to determine whether it shall use the name Congregational or Christian; or Congregational Christian to indicate its denominational status; and it is understood that the adherence to the name used shall, in no case, be construed as a lack of loyalty to the denomination.

A Congregational, Christian, or Congregational Christian Church is an autonomous body of the followers of Christ, organized for religious instruction, spiritual improvement, the worship of God, and the propagation of the Gospel among men and society.

SECTION II

Organization of Churches

Those wishing to organize a new church within the bounds of the Southern Convention may use the form of organization set forth by the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches, or the following:

We, whose names are hereunto affixed, members, as we trust, of the body of Christ, having exercised

repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, being desirous of associating ourselves together as a church, agree to be governed by the following Principles:

- (1) The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church.
- (2) Christian is a sufficient name for the Church.
- (3) The Holy Bible is a sufficient rule of faith and practice.
- (4) Christian character is a sufficient test of fellowship and of Church membership.
- (5) The right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience is a right and privilege that should be accorded to, and exercised by all.

Those who have signed the agreement above, or as set forth in this Section, should elect a Secretary, Treasurer, three or more Trustees, and other officers or committees as may be necessary. They should also elect two, or more, Deacons, who should be duly ordained by an ordained Minister. Respecting the election of Deacons, time should be had for careful consultation, reflection and prayer, that the choice may fall upon those best suited to the office.

After organization, members may be received from any evangelical denomination by letter or other evidence showing their full connection therewith, or by exercising repentance and faith.

The denominational standing of a church is determined by membership in a Conference of the Convention.

SECTION III

Duties of Churches

Every church should procure a Pastor, recognized by its Conference as an Ordained Minister in full and

regular standing, a Licentiate, or a Conference or Limited Ordained Pastor, for full time; or the church should associate itself with other contiguous churches in the part-time employment of a Pastor. The call should preferably be for an indefinite period, and when a change is desired by either party, three months' notice should be given.

The church should faithfully teach the duty of Scriptural giving, that it may provide for the liberal support of the Pastor, current expenses, and the general work of the Kingdom.

It shall be the duty of every church, as early as practicable after its organization, to unite with the Conference in whose bounds it may be located, and to comply with all requests of the Conference to which it may belong.

The church should observe the ordinances and maintain gospel worship in its purity and simplicity.

Every church should celebrate the Lord's Supper at least four times a year.

The church should hold necessary conferences for the transaction of business.

Each church should adopt a Constitution and By-Laws suitable to its needs and consistent with the spirit and contents of The Manual approved by the Convention (Parts I, II, III).

SECTION IV

Duties and Privileges of Members

It is the duty and privilege of each member:

1. To live a Christian life, developed by Bible study, private devotions, public worship, and Christian service.

2. To attend the stated meetings of the church and to share in all the work of the church by participating in the business of the church, by holding office when elected, and by engaging in services for which their abilities fit them.

3. To enter into the lives of fellow church members through mutual sympathy and helpfulness.

4. To give of their money to the support of the church and its enterprises, as the Lord prospers them.

5. To endeavor earnestly to keep peace and unity in the church; to study its interests and work for its success.

6. To pray for and sympathize with one another.

Chapter II

CHURCH OFFICERS

SECTION I

Officers of Churches

The necessary officers of the church are Pastor, Deacons, Secretary, Treasurer and Trustees.

SECTION II

Duties of a Pastor

1. The pastoral office is the highest and most important in the church, and the person who holds this office is, in Scripture, charged with various duties (Acts 20:28; Jer. 3:15; I Peter 5:1, 3; I Cor. 4:1; II Cor. 5:20; Titus 1:7).

2. A Pastor shall be a member of some local church of the denomination and of the Conference in which he

works. Any exception to this requirement must be approved by the Conference in which the church involved is a member.

3. It is his duty to give himself continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4), and to study to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed (II Tim. 2:15).

4. It is his duty to see that the churches to which he ministers, and also the members thereof, discharge the obligations imposed by the Holy Scriptures and by the Church government.

5. It is his duty to comply with all the requests, and to execute to the best of his ability all the orders of the Conference.

6. It is his duty to be present at every annual meeting of the Conference and submit a written report of his labors. If prevented from attending, he shall report by letter.

7. It is his duty to promote the peace and unity of the Church, to study its interests, and labor for its prosperity.

8. Unless the church makes other provisions in its Constitution and By-Laws, the Pastor ordinarily shall preside at all business meetings of the church, except in cases where his pastoral relation or his position is involved.

SECTION III

Duties of Deacons

Deacons may be elected for life or for a definite term of years. Their duties shall be as follows (I Tim. 3:8-13):

1. They shall minister to the needs of the poor.

2. They shall make suitable arrangements for, and assist the Pastor in, the administration of the ordinances.

3. In the absence of the Pastor, one of the Deacons shall preside at all business meetings of the church and conduct the public worship of the congregation, unless the church shall rule otherwise.

4. They shall counsel with the Pastor in the government and spiritual affairs of the church.

SECTION IV

Duties of the Secretary

1. The Secretary shall record all the transactions of the church, whether at stated or called sessions, or conferences thereof.

2. He shall record all admissions into the church, and state whether they be by letter or upon profession of faith; if by letter, state from what church or denomination the applicants came, always affixing the date.

3. He shall keep an accurate account of all baptisms, christenings, consecrations, deaths, changes of name by marriage, dismissals, suspensions, and expulsions, and by order of the church shall issue letters of transfer and commendation.

4. He shall attest all the acts and proceedings of the church.

5. He shall have in charge and carefully preserve all the records of the church, which shall be open to the inspection of the Pastor and the church, and which he shall deliver to his successor in office.

Certificate of Membership and Commendation

.....19.....

This certifies that is
 a member in good standing, of
 Congregational Christian Church,
 Conference, and is, at own request hereby
 dismissed from this church to unite with
 Church, and when so received
 responsibility to this church will cease.

Done this the..... day of, 19.....,

..... Secretary. Pastor.

SECTION V

Duties of the Treasurer

1. The Treasurer shall receive all contributions of the members and friends of the church. He shall keep a full account of all moneys received and paid out by the order of the church, to whom paid and for what purpose. He may serve also as collector, to whom the church may appoint one or more assistants.

2. He shall report in writing at least annually, or as often as the church may require, all receipts and disbursements, and his books shall be audited annually.

SECTION VI

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees, subject to the direction of the church, shall have the care and custody of the

property of the church, and may have charge of its financial affairs. However, this latter may be cared for by a Board of Finance.

Chapter III

LOCAL CHURCH PROPERTY

Local churches or Trustees of local churches hold property in trust for the use of members of the local Congregational Christian Church, the Conference and the denomination, and said property cannot be disposed of without the consent of the Conference to which the local church belongs.

Chapter IV

MINISTERS

Candidates

The ministry is the highest office in the Congregational Christian Churches. To it come the people who believe that God has called them to this specialized type of Christian service.

In the Southern Convention there are four divisions of the Christian ministry, each with its particular duties and responsibilities. A member of either group is entitled to all the rights and privileges of the ministry, limited only as stated in the following Sections.

In addition to these divisions of the ministry, provision is made for a special order designated "Lay Preachers" outlined in Section V of this Chapter.

SECTION I

Candidates in Care of the Conference

1. Candidates in Care of the Conference are enrolled by Conference, and at all times shall be subject to

guidance of the Conference Committee on the Ministry. They are given the privilege of preaching wherever there is opportunity, but may not in their own name serve as pastors of churches, nor administer the ordinances. A Candidate in Care may serve a church under the direction of an ordained minister in full standing designated as his sponsor by the Conference Committee on the Ministry.

2. A candidate must be a member of a church of the Conference in which he seeks membership, be recommended by his church, have good moral character, and show promise of becoming an effective Minister.

3. Application for enrollment must be made to the Conference through the Committee on the Ministry. The Committee will examine the candidate on his call to the ministry, his Christian experience, his knowledge of the Congregational Christian Churches, and his willingness and ability to pursue further training.

4. Candidates found worthy will be recommended to Conference in session, and, if approved, will be directed in further education by the Committee on the Ministry.

5. Candidates in Care will report to the Conference through the Committee on the Ministry annually. Failure to make report will indicate that the member no longer desires such standing, and he shall be dropped from the roll. Promotion from the In Care status to a Licentiate depends upon the progress made by the candidate.

6. The Conference shall follow the official service for receiving candidates for the Ministry in Care of the Conference by using the form suggested in "A Handbook of Standards, Procedures and Services," authorized by the Department of the Ministry of the Congregational Christian Churches.

SECTION II

Licentiates

1. A Licentiate is one authorized by the Conference to preach the gospel as a probationer until he shall give proof of his ability to teach efficiently the great doctrine of salvation (I Tim. 5:22).

2. Ordinarily license would be granted only to those who contemplate ordination, and not until the candidate has completed the Sophomore year in college, or its equivalent. Special care should be taken that the candidate for licensure possesses the moral, religious and literary qualifications necessary to fit him for the responsible position to which he aspires (II Tim. 2:2 and I Tim. 3:6). He shall, therefore, be a man of unblemished Christian character and be recommended by the church of which he is a member.

3. That there may be no doubt of his qualifications, he shall be carefully examined by the Committee as to:

- (a) His religious experience, and his call to the ministry (Rom. 10:15).
- (b) His knowledge of the Principles and Government of the Convention and the organization of the denomination.
- (c) His knowledge of the Scriptures, and of the leading doctrines of Christianity.

4. The Committee shall report to the Conference as to the qualifications of the applicant and his fitness for licensure.

5. The Conference, being satisfied with his proficiency, shall provide for his licensure during the session of Conference, or some subsequent time, and shall issue a certificate of licensure, signed by the President

and the Secretary. Licensure may be renewed annually.

6. The Service of Licensure to be followed may be found in "A Handbook of Standards, Procedures and Services," authorized by the Department of the Ministry of the Congregational Christian Churches, but the form provided in the Manual may be followed.

7. Only under emergency circumstances shall an Executive Committee feel justified in granting licensure *ad interim*.

8. Rights and Privileges of Licentiates:

(a) A Licentiate may serve as pastor of a church or churches in the Conference where he holds standing. Provided he has graduated from a senior college, upon the request of the church served and approval of the Conference Committee on the Ministry, he may conduct the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper in the church or churches he serves as a regularly called pastor, but not in another church.

(b) A Licentiate may not perform the marriage service. The laws of the states of North Carolina and Virginia require ordination for the performing of this rite.

9. When a Licentiate shall have preached for a reasonable length of time, and his services do not appear profitable to the churches, the Conference shall revoke his license, and demand the return of his credentials.

SECTION III

Ordained Ministers

In Full and Regular Standing

1. The importance and responsibility of the office of an Ordained Minister in Full and Regular Standing

require that the incumbent possess an unsullied Christian character, a good education and a ready capacity to teach (I Tim. 3:2).

2. Every candidate for ordination shall have preached a sufficient length of time to give ample evidence of usefulness to the Church (I Tim. 3:6, 7), have graduated from college and seminary, or shall satisfy the examining committee as to his educational qualifications, and be recommended by one or more of the congregations to which he has ministered.

3. He shall be carefully examined by the Committee on the Ministry of his Conference upon the following: His reason for asking for ordination, his knowledge of the Principles and Government of the Southern Convention and the organization of the denomination, his knowledge of the Bible, and the fundamentals of Church history.

4. The Conference, being satisfied with the qualifications of the candidate, shall appoint an ordaining presbytery of Ordained Ministers in Full and Regular Standing to set him apart to the sacred office of an Ordained Minister in full and Regular Standing in the Church. Persons so ordained thereby become members of the Conference.

5. Ordained Ministers of other evangelical denominations may be received as Ordained Ministers in Full and Regular Standing without re-ordination, provided their ordination papers are satisfactory and they show satisfactory knowledge of the Principles and Government of the Southern Convention and the organization of the denomination, and are recommended by the Committee.

6. Dual Standing.

Ordained Ministers of other evangelical denominations may be received as Ordained Ministers in "Dual Standing" provided they meet the qualifications set forth in 5 above. "Dual Standing" is interpreted to mean that a Minister may hold standing in another recognized religious body as well as in our own in order to preserve certain rights and privileges such as annuities, insurance, etc., and at the same time, meet the requirements expected of a Pastor in a church of the Southern Convention. (See Sec. II, 2, Page 29.)

(Note: With reference to dual standing of Evangelical and Reformed Churches and Ministers, please refer to document entitled "Next Steps In Union," 1957, published by the Executive Board of the Southern Convention, See III A and B. With reference to "name," see II A, same document.)

SECTION IV

Conference or Limited Ordained Pastors

1. In the case of persons not expected to qualify for ordination as Ministers in Full and Regular Standing, but who testify to a call to preach and who are in respect to moral character and Christian experience well qualified, it is provided that they may be set apart as Local or Conference Pastors and licensed or ordained as such for one year.

2. Local or Conference Pastors shall have standing only in the Conference or Conferences ordaining them, and their standing in the Conference may be renewed annually.

3. If a Local or Conference Pastor shall accept a call to a field within the bounds of another Conference than that ordaining him, he shall forfeit his minister-

ial standing, unless by due procedure he secures like recognition from the other Conference.

4. The names of Local or Conference Pastors shall be carried in a separate list in the Ministerial Directory of **The Annual**.

5. The ordination of men to this order is not to be encouraged, and should be resorted to only in cases of real necessity and it is not looked upon as candidacy to ordination as a Minister in Full and Regular standing.

6. Local or Conference Pastors shall be expected to pursue a course of study as prescribed by the Committee on the Ministry.

SECTION V

Lay Preachers

1. A Lay Preacher of the Southern Convention is one of its unordained members who has been recommended by his local church and recognized by his Conference upon approval of the Conference Committee on the Ministry for duties, mainly preaching and conducting services of worship, within that Conference, and under its guidance.

2. A Lay Preacher is without ordination and does not expect to apply for ordination. He will not be in permanent charge of a church, nor will he administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. He will not be qualified as a Lay Preacher to perform marriages.

3. It is not expected that the academic standards outlined for licensure and ordination should be applied to Lay Preachers, but in terms of character and Christian experience the qualifications should not be lower than in the case of candidates for licensure or

ordination. A Lay Preacher is expected to pursue a course of study recommended by the Conference Committee on the Ministry.

4. The name of a Lay Preacher shall be carried on the roll of his Conference as a Lay Preacher, but not as a ministerial member even though serving a church temporarily. He is listed in *The Annual and Year Book* as a Lay Preacher. He is not eligible for membership in the Annuity Fund.

Chapter V CONFERENCES

SECTION I *Membership*

1. A Conference shall be composed of all ordained Ministers and all churches organized upon the Cardinal Principles of Congregational Christian Churches and admitted to membership, within certain specified bounds.

2. Every church shall have lay representation, and each Conference shall fix its own ratio. However, it is recommended that each church shall be entitled to two delegates. Churches having more than 200 members shall have an additional delegate for each 100 members, or major fraction thereof, provided that no church has more than four delegates.

3. One-fourth of the Ministers belonging to the Conference and as many delegates as may be present at the time and place appointed shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

4. Ministers and messengers from sister Congregational Christian Conferences or Associations and from Evangelical and Reformed Church Synods shall be en-

titled to seats as deliberative members but may not vote. Ministers in good standing in any other evangelical Church may be introduced to the Conference as visiting brethren.

5. Jointly sponsored United Church of Christ congregations shall be entitled to hold dual membership in a Conference of the Southern Convention and a corresponding body of cooperating denominations.

SECTION II

Organization

1. Conference shall meet on its own adjournment, and shall be called to order by the President; or in his absence, by the Vice-President. Then shall follow religious exercises.

2. The Secretary (or, in his absence, any one invited to act *pro tempore*) shall then proceed to read the roll of Ministers and churches belonging to the Conference; and if a quorum be present the fact shall be announced and the organization completed.

3. A President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, and Treasurer and other necessary officers shall be elected in a manner approved by the Conference.

4. All officers shall be elected for a term of one year, or until their successors are elected.

5. The Conference shall be governed by such rules as usually govern deliberative assemblies; or it may adopt such rules and regulations as appear best suited to its needs.

6. It is recommended that each Conference shall incorporate under the laws of the State and adopt a

Constitution and By-Laws which shall be in harmony with the provision outlined in the Manual in Parts I, II, III.

SECTION III

Duties of Officers

A Conference's Constitution and By-Laws should provide for the duties of officers which are consistent with paragraphs 1-5 of this section.

1. The President shall call the Conference to order, sign all the proceedings of the Conference and perform such other duties as his office may require.

2. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President shall perform the duties of the office.

3. The Secretary shall have charge of, and preserve all the books and records of the Conference, attest all its proceedings, and see that they are duly recorded, and do whatever else may be imposed upon him by the duties of his office.

4. In the absence of the Secretary, the Assistant Secretary shall perform all the duties pertaining to the office.

5. The Treasurer shall have charge of and safely keep all funds belonging to the Conference, and shall invest, dispose of, or pay out these funds only on order of the Conference.

SECTION IV

Business of the Conference

1. The Conference shall meet annually for the transaction of such business as may advance the interest of the Church and the cause of God.

2. Business may be transacted in the order of time in which it may be presented, in accordance with a

program previously arranged under the direction of the Conference, except a matter that is made the special order of the day.

3. Conferences should appoint the following Standing Committees: Executive, Ministry, Missions, Christian Education and Literature, Evangelism, Stewardship and Apportionment, Social Action, Memoirs, and others when deemed advisable. A Board of Trustees should be elected, if required by state law, or as may be determined by the Conference. The duties of these committees are as follows:

(a) **The Executive Committee**, two members of which shall be the President and Secretary of the Conference. This committee shall transact necessary business between sessions of the Conference.

(b) **The Committee on the Ministry** shall be composed of Ordained Ministers in full and regular standing; all questions and matters pertaining to candidates for the ministry shall be under their charge; applicants for licensure or ordination shall be examined by them; and all Ministers applying for admission into the Conference shall be referred to them. The committee shall promote the interests of the ministry.

(c) **The Missions Committee** shall have charge of all matters pertaining to Home Missions and Ministerial Relief within the bounds of the Conference; shall acquaint the churches with the denominational work in Home Missions; shall keep in touch with and report upon the Foreign Mission interest of the denomination; and shall encourage adequate support for the missionary enterprise of the Conference, Convention and denomination.

(d) **The Committee on Christian Education and Literature** shall report on the general condition of Sunday School work within the Conference and shall

make recommendations for its development, with special emphasis upon the promotion of Leadership Training. It shall also include Pilgrim Fellowship in its program of promotion and development, seeking to enlist the cooperation of young people in every department of our Church. It shall include also the interests of higher education, especially as they are represented in Elon College. The committee shall assist in the circulation of denominational publications and recommend the best literature for the people.

(e) **The Committee on Stewardship and Apportionment** shall seek to promote the Christian principle in the acquisition and use of material possessions, time and talents; shall promote effective emphasis upon systematic giving for the support of the local church, Conference, Convention, and denominational program at home and abroad. The committee shall make a report each year on Conference Apportionments for the local churches, recommending the amounts to be raised by the churches for the enterprises of the Conference, Convention, and denomination.

(f) **The Social Action Committee** shall study the moral, social and economic health of the local community, state, nation and world, and shall suggest courses of action on all such matters; shall seek to promote peace, brotherhood, temperance; shall seek to promote consistent Christian attitude and action on the part of church members in particular.

(g) **The Committee on Memoirs** shall report suitable resolutions upon the death of Ministers or Conference officials each year.

(h) **The Committee on Evangelism** shall endeavor to intensify the spiritual life of the churches, to awaken a general evangelistic spirit among them, to

furnish evangelistic information, and to suggest a program.

4. If deemed advisable, the above Committees, one and all, may be incorporated as Boards, in which case they should be elected. Such Boards are competent to transact the business specified in their charters, to which the Conference must first assent.

5. The Conference may require every Minister to make a full report in writing of his ministerial labors during the year. If he neglects to make such report for three consecutive years, his credentials shall be revoked.

6. Churches shall be required to report to the Conference annually, using the blank provided by the Convention for that purpose.

7. All Ministers shall be present at the regular session of their Conference or be satisfactorily accounted for, and should remain throughout unless, upon request, permission for absence is granted by the President, the Conference confirming by common consent.

Chapter VI THE CONVENTION

CONSTITUTION Article I — *Name*

The name of this organization shall be The Southern Convention of Congregational Christian Churches, Incorporated.

Article II — *Area*

The area of the Convention shall be the territory served by the constituent Conferences, namely: Virginia Valley Central, Eastern Virginia, Eastern North Carolina, Western North Carolina, and North

Carolina and Virginia; and/or such others as authorized by The Southern Convention.

Article III — *Purpose*

The purpose of the Convention is to build the Kingdom of God, and to that end it shall have general supervision of all the enterprises of the denomination within the bounds of the Conferences of which it is composed.

Article IV — *Powers*

Section 1. The Convention shall have the power to do all that is necessary to carry out the purpose of the organization as outlined in Article III, and as provided for in its charter.

Section 2. All difficulties arising in the local Conferences may be carried, by appeal, to the Convention; whose decision shall be final.

Section 3. The Convention shall determine the bounds of the local Conferences.

Section 4. For the division of existing Conferences or the formation of new ones, application shall be made to the Convention, and when the good of the cause demands the division of an old Conference, a division may be ordered or a new Conference may be formed.

Article V — *Membership*

All ordained Ministers in regular standing in any of the constituent Conferences, and all members of Boards and Standing Committees of the Convention, shall be members and entitled to vote.

The President and Secretary of each constituent Conference shall be members of the Convention, and entitled to vote.

Presidents of Convention Institutions and Boards, and the Superintendent of the Congregational Christian Home for Children shall be members of the Convention, and entitled to vote.

Churches within the Convention are requested to nominate lay delegates to the Convention. These delegates shall be elected by the Conferences. Each church is entitled to one delegate. Churches which have more than two hundred members are entitled to one additional delegate for each additional two hundred members, or major fraction thereof, provided that no church shall have more than four delegates. Members of the Convention shall serve for the biennium for which they are elected, or until their successors are elected.

Article VI — *Meetings*

The Convention shall meet biennially for the transaction of business and for religious services at such time and place as may be designated by the By-laws or by vote of the Convention. Special meetings may be called at any time as stated in the By-laws.

Article VII — *Quorum*

Forty qualified members of the Convention shall constitute a quorum necessary for the transaction of Convention business.

Article VIII — *Officers*

Section 1. **Designation.** The officers of the Convention shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Treasurer, a Recording Secretary, a Superintendent, a Historian, and the Editor of **The Christian Sun**.

Section 2. Eligibility. Any member of any church in any of the constituent Conferences shall be eligible to hold office in the Convention.

Section 3. Election and Term of Office. All officers and Board members, except the Superintendent and other employed officials, secretaries, and/or field staff who shall be nominated by the Executive Board, and the Editor of *The Christian Sun*, who shall be nominated by the Board of Publications, shall be elected by the Convention upon nomination of the Nominating Committee. Nominations may also be made from the floor for any office. Officers and Board members shall be elected to serve for the biennium unless otherwise designated, or until their successors are elected and qualified. (See By-law 7-a.)

Section 4. Duties. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Convention and perform all the duties generally incumbent upon the president of a corporation. He shall be chairman of the Executive Board.

The Vice President in the absence of the President shall perform the duties of the office.

The Recording Secretary shall faithfully keep all records of the Convention and of the Executive Board, and perform all the duties that usually pertain to that office.

The Treasurer shall receive all funds through the Convention Office for the Convention and denominational enterprises, except for Conference interests, give receipt therefor, keep an accurate record of the same, shall deposit such funds in a depository designated by the Executive Board; and shall disburse funds for the Convention obligations as provided by the budget approved by the Convention or its Execu-

tive Board; shall disburse designated funds to Boards, Institutions, and other agencies at regular intervals; and may disburse for Board and agencies their funds upon order of proper official of respective Boards or agencies. He shall make reports to the semi-annual meetings of the Executive Board, to the biennial sessions of the Convention, and at such other times as may be requested by the Executive Board or the Convention. He shall be adequately bonded and his accounts shall be audited annually as determined by the Executive Board.

The Superintendent shall be a full time paid official of the Convention and shall work under the supervision of the Executive Board. He shall be a member ex officio, without vote, of all Convention Boards and Committees, and of Boards of Trustees of Elon College, the Congregational Christian Home for Children, and of the Boards of other Convention Institutions. It shall be his duty to become informed concerning each phase of the work of the Convention and denomination. He shall seek to promote coordination of the work of the Convention at the discretion of the Executive Board, so that each phase of the work may be done with efficiency of time and money. He shall visit and assist with fraternal counsel, Pastors, churches and Conferences, but shall have no authority over them. He shall be at the service of all Boards and Committees of the Convention. He shall compile the materials for **The Annual**, prepare the same for publication, and in consultation with the Board of Publications, shall supervise the printing and distribution of **The Annual**. He shall serve as Registrar and furnish the materials for the national Congregational Christian Yearbook. As the executive officer of the Convention, he shall represent the Convention in denominational and inter-denominational meetings. He shall report his work

regularly to the sessions of the Executive Board and to the biennial sessions of the Convention. He shall be bonded for such amount as may be authorized by the Executive Board.

Article IX — *Employed Staff*

Section 1. The Convention or the Executive Board may, insofar as funds will permit, employ, fix the duties and terms of service, and determine the remuneration of such office or field personnel as may be needed to do the work of the Convention and its Boards efficiently and economically. Such employed personnel shall report regularly to the Executive Board and Convention sessions themselves or through the Superintendent.

Section 2. **The Bookkeeper and Assistant Treasurer.** The Executive Board may name a member of the Convention Office personnel to serve as Bookkeeper and Assistant Treasurer and otherwise assist the Treasurer in the discharge of his duties. The Assistant Treasurer shall sign checks of the Convention upon conditions governing the Treasurer, such checks to be countersigned by the Treasurer; shall be adequately bonded, and his accounts shall be audited in connection with the audit of the account of the Treasurer, as determined by the Executive Board.

Article X — *Boards*

Section 1. **Executive Board.** The Executive Board shall be composed of the Convention President, Vice President, Secretary, and Chairman of the Finance Committee; two representatives from each constituent Conference, nominated by the Conference; one member each nominated by the Boards of the Convention; the

President of Elon College, the Superintendent of the Congregational Christian Home for Children, and similar executive heads of the recognized Institutions of the Convention; one each nominated by the Convention Women's Fellowship, the Pilgrim Fellowship, the Laymen's Fellowship, the Historical Society, and three members-at-large nominated by the Convention itself.

The Superintendent, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Editor of **The Christian Sun**, and all other elected salaries Secretaries or field staff of the Convention and its authorized Boards shall be ex officio members of the Board, with voice, but without vote.

The Executive Board shall be the body to whom shall be referred all matters of business which require attention and action between sessions of the Convention.

It shall be the duty of the Board to make effective the plans and programs of the Convention. It shall review and pass upon the plans of Boards and Institutions of the Convention when such plans anticipate calling upon the churches for additional funds between the sessions of the Convention. The Board shall have authority in matters dealing with employed personnel of the Convention and the Convention Office. The Board shall report its activities to each biennial session of the Convention, and its minutes shall become part of the minutes of the Convention.

Section 2. Mission Board. This Board shall work according to the purpose of its charter for the promotion of missionary education and activity among the churches and Conferences. It shall serve as the Church Extension and Ministerial Relief Divisions of the Convention. In addition to its usual work for the

interests of home and foreign missions, it shall survey the needs and promote adequate support for the Convention's retired and disabled Ministers and their dependents. Its current funds designated for Ministerial Relief (or Superannuation) shall be administered through the Division of Ministerial Relief of the Board of Home Missions of the Congregational Christian Churches, and the Mission Board shall designate a committee from its members to receive applications for, and recommend to the Board beneficiaries for grants from the national Board.

This Board shall be composed of fifteen members, fourteen members elected by the Convention, seven of whom shall be elected biennially for a term of four years, and one of whom shall be the President of the Convention Women's Fellowship. As far as possible the Board shall have representatives from all constituent Conferences.

Section 3. Board of Christian Education. This Board shall work according to the purpose of its charter, and shall be the Educational Division of the Convention. It shall promote Christian Education in the homes, the churches, colleges, universities and divinity schools connected with, or related to the Convention. The Board shall be composed of ten members, five of whom shall be elected biennially for a term of four years.

Section 4. Board of Publications. This Board shall have charge of the publication of *The Christian Sun* and such other publications as the Convention may direct, and shall make contracts for printing and distributing the same. It shall be composed of six members, elected in two classes of four years each.

Section 5. The Congregational Christian Home for Children and Elon College, located at Elon College,

North Carolina, are Institutions under the control of the Convention according to the provisions of their charters of incorporation.

Section 6. Historical Society. The purpose of this Society shall be to preserve the shrines of the Congregational Christian Churches in the area, gather historical material, and maintain suitable housing for the preservation and use of these materials.

Section 7. The Board and Institutions named in Sections 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 in this Article shall make a biennial report to the Convention, showing the assets, liabilities, resources, income, expenses, and the activities of the Boards or Institutions.

Article XI — *Committees*

Section 1. Standing Committees. The Convention shall appoint such standing committees as may be needed, including:

a. **Finance**, composed of five members appointed by the Convention and five elected by the Executive Board to serve for the ensuing biennium. It shall study the financial interests and needs of the Convention and submit a proposed budget at each biennial session.

b. **Spiritual Life and Evangelism.**

c. **Stewardship.**

d. **Social Action.**

e. **Town and Country Church.**

f. **Ministry.**

Section 2. Special Committees. The Convention may appoint such special committees as may be needed, including:

a. **Business**, composed of three members appointed at the opening session of the Convention. All matters

of business not on the program shall be referred to the Business Committee which will decide if they are pertinent, and if so, suggest places on the program for their consideration. The Committee will endeavor to see that no conflicting motions are adopted.

b. **Nomination**, composed of five members elected by the Executive Board at least three months before the regular session of the Convention. This Committee shall make nominations of all officers, administrative and field staff, of the Convention, and members of Boards, except those otherwise provided for.

c. **Program**.

d. **Memoirs**.

In the interest of uniformity and coordination, the Conferences are requested to conform to the organization of the Convention.

Article XII — *Vacancies*

Any vacancies occurring in offices of the Convention, Boards and Committees, in the interim, shall be filled by the Executive Board to serve until the next session of the Convention, or as may be provided for by the charters.

Article XIII — *Convention Office*

There shall be a Convention Office operating under the supervision of the Executive Board, with the Superintendent as its executive officer. This office should be centrally located. It shall have adequate personnel to do effective work; shall seek to serve the churches, Conferences, Boards, and Institutions of the Convention; shall endeavor to make effective the plans, programs and ideals of the Convention, and

through its executive officer shall report regularly to the Executive Board and to the sessions of the Convention. The Convention Office shall have the same relationship to the General Council and Boards of the denomination as other State Conference Offices.

Article XIV — *Auxiliary Organizations*

Section 1. Women's Work. The Women's Fellowship shall be recognized as an auxiliary of the Southern Convention. The work shall be encouraged and supported. Biennial reports shall become part of the records of the Convention.

Section 2. Men's Work. The work of the men of the Convention shall be encouraged and supported. The Laymen's Fellowship shall be recognized as an auxiliary of the Convention, and its biennial report shall become a part of the records of the Convention.

Section 3. Young People's Work. The work of the young people in the Convention shall be recognized, encouraged and promoted. The Pilgrim Fellowship Council shall be recognized as an auxiliary of the Convention, and its biennial report shall become part of the records of the Convention. The council shall work in close cooperation with the Board of Christian Education.

Section 4. Elon College (Articles of Incorporation).

Section 5. The Congregational Christian Home for Children (Articles of Incorporation).

Section 6 . Other Institutions. Other auxiliaries and institutions may be recognized as constituent parts of the Convention by two-thirds vote of the Convention at any regular session.

Article XV — *Amendments*

All amendments or changes in the Principles and Government, Constitution, Official Forms and Ceremonies, shall be made by a two-thirds vote of the Convention in regular or special session. All motions or resolutions for such amendments or changes shall be published in the Church paper at least three months before the session at which the subject is to be considered.

BY-LAWS

Section 1. Time of Meeting. The Convention shall meet biennially on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday before the first Sunday in May.

Section 2. Place of Meeting. The place of meeting shall be determined by vote of the Convention or the Executive Board, due regard being given to various areas of the Convention.

Section 3. Convention Biennium and Fiscal Year. The Convention biennium shall be from adjournment of one regular session to adjournment of the next.

The fiscal year of the Convention shall be January 1 to December 31, and financial reports shall be as of these dates.

The President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and other officers and committees of the Convention, except paid officials and staff personnel, shall take office at the beginning of the biennium for which they are elected, and shall serve for two years, or until their successors are elected and qualified.

Paid officials and staff personnel of the Convention shall take office July 1 following the meeting of the Convention, it being understood that 90 days notice

shall be given when changes of such personnel are anticipated.

Section 4. Conduct of Business. Each session of the Convention shall be opened and closed with religious services, the President or his alternate presiding. Business shall be conducted in the usual way for such organizations. When no rule of the Convention applies, Roberts' Rules of Order (latest edition) shall be final authority.

Section 5. Special Meetings. Special meetings may be called by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Board, or by petition signed by 25 members of the Convention. Announcement of such call shall be made public at least one month in advance and all delegates notified in writing at least ten days before the meeting. Only such matters shall be voted as are stated in the call.

Section 6. Executive Board. The Executive Board shall meet twice each year, the exact time and place to be determined by the Board, or by the Chairman and Secretary, the Members of the Board being notified in writing two weeks prior to the meeting. Special meetings may be called by the Chairman, Secretary, or any five members of the Board, upon two weeks notice in writing to all members of the Board.

Twelve members of the Executive Board present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

The Executive Board may name its own Executive Committee.

Section 7. Finances. The Finance Committee, after a careful survey of the needs of the Convention, Conferences and Convention enterprises, shall submit a report to the Convention of the amount needed to

carry forward the complete program, which when adopted by the Convention, shall be apportioned to the Conferences, and the Conferences requested to apportion the respective amounts to the churches.

The Convention shall outline financial plans that will enable the churches to raise the amounts requested, and develop Christian stewardship.

The churches, Sunday Schools and other organizations shall be requested to send all money for Convention apportionments, denominational enterprises, and Conference causes to the Treasurer of the Convention through the Convention Office with a statement as to the purpose for which it is sent.

Section 7-a. Tenure of office. The terms of office for members of the Mission Board, Board of Christian Education, Board of Publications, the Conference Representatives, and At-large members of the Executive Board shall be four years, and members of these Boards shall be divided into classes so that the term of a class shall expire every two years.

Members of said Boards who have served the equivalent of two full terms shall not be eligible for re-nomination and re-election for a period of two years after the expiration of the former term.

Section 8. General Council. The Convention shall maintain membership in the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches by electing proper delegates according to the rules of the Council, and by fulfilling the other requests of the Council.

Section 9. Fraternal Delegates. Friendship with other religious bodies shall be maintained through the exchange of fraternal delegates.

Section 10. These By-Laws may be amended by a majority vote at any regular meeting. By a two-thirds vote the rules may be suspended temporarily.

Chapter VII DISCIPLINE

SECTION I

1. The local churches shall have jurisdiction over members and should deal with offenders in the light of Gal. 6:1 and Matt. 18:15-17.

2. Caution should be exercised in receiving accusations against members, and investigations should be conducted with a view to restoration.

3. If an accused person is unable to represent himself before a Committee of Investigation, he may request a Minister or a member of his own church to represent him.

4. After due citation of the parties, trials shall be impartial and in the spirit of affection.

SECTION II

1. Conferences only have jurisdiction over Ministers. They are recognized, licensed, and ordained by Conferences, amenable to Conference and from the decision of Conference there is no appeal.

2. Charges against a Minister can be preferred only by two or more Ministers, a church (I Tim. 5:19), or by common fame. Prosecutions can be made only by a Minister or by a committee from the church preferring the charge. Parties prosecuting a Minister should be warned that failure to sustain the charges will subject them to censure.

3. Accused Ministers shall be furnished with a copy of the charges, the names of the witnesses, and allowed twenty days to prepare for trial. The investigation

shall be conducted by all the Ministers present at Conference, or by the Executive Committee and the Ministers of the Conference *ad interim*; and in either case, the findings shall be reported to Conference for final action.

SECTION III

1. Charges against a church for neglect of duty or violation of church government may be preferred by a sister church or two or more Ministers; and, in either case, the charges must be prosecuted in the name of the party preferring the charge. The same caution and good spirit should be exercised in the trial of a church as in the trial of a Minister. The investigation may be at its own place of worship, or at some other place, through a Committee appointed by the Conference, or the Executive Committee.

2. A church found guilty of charges may be admonished, censured, or cut off from the Conference; but the sentence against a church should not involve members who protest against the offense with which the church is charged. When a church is dismissed, the Conference should claim title to the property in accordance with Part II, Chapter III — Local Church Property. A church which has been dismissed may be restored by repentance and application. The competency of witnesses shall be determined by the court of trial in all cases.

PART III

OFFICIAL FORMS AND CEREMONIES

Chapter I

RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

1. On confession of faith.

a. Persons desiring to unite with the church upon confession of faith shall present themselves before the altar, while a hymn is being sung, either before or after the sermon. Candidates should be previously instructed by the Pastor or Deacons as to the history and polity of the Congregational Christian Churches and the qualifications and duties of Church membership.

It should increasingly become the custom in our churches for children to attend the annual Pastor's class before they unite with the church. Members may be received at any time, but most churches provide for the reception of new members at Christmas, Easter, Children's Day, or at some time when Holy Communion is observed. The service of reception should be so invested with beauty and solemnity as to make it an occasion never to be forgotten. Candidates should be reminded that in joining a local congregation they are likewise becoming members of the world-wide Church of Christ which embraces all those of whatever name who accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The new members should also be urged to consider church membership a sacred relationship which should be carefully maintained in an active state throughout life.

b. The Minister shall examine the candidates in the presence of the congregation as follows:

- (1) Do you sincerely and heartily repent of your sins?
- (2) Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and as the Savior of the world?
- (3) Is it your purpose through grace to live a Christian life?
- (4) Do you promise, to the best of your ability, to attend the services of the church, participate in its program of worship and service, support its righteous enterprises, and promote to the utmost of your power, its purity, its peace, and its prosperity?

2. By Letter of Transfer or Reaffirmation of Faith.

a. The Minister shall examine the candidates in the presence of the congregation as follows:

Having before made public confession of your faith in Christ, and desiring to enter into the membership of this church, do you promise, to the best of your ability, to attend the services of the church, to participate in its program of worship and service, to support its righteous enterprises, and to promote to the utmost of your power, its purity, its peace, and its prosperity?

3. The candidates should here be approved by vote of the membership.

4. The Minister may then address them as follows:

On behalf of the church, I extend to you the right hand of fellowship and welcome you into the church, and to all of its privileges. May you at all times be found true and faithful. I commend to you the Holy Bible as a sufficient rule of faith and practice and charge you to be careful in studying the Scriptures and constant in prayer. God grant that you may give

yourself with fidelity to the Church on earth until you are called to the joys of the Church triumphant in heaven. As we now receive you into the fellowship of the church, we pledge that we will seek to uphold and strengthen you in the Christian life, and together grow in the knowledge of Christ, that we may advance His kingdom throughout the world.

5. Here may be sung a verse of "Blest Be the Tie That Binds," or some other suitable hymn. At this time the Deacons may also extend the right hand of fellowship.

6. Many churches present the new members with a Manual for Church Members, a certificate, or a copy of the Scriptures, with the name and date of reception written therein.

Chapter II

ADMINISTRATION OF BAPTISM

The mode of baptism is optional with the candidate and should be administered only by an ordained Minister or a Licentiate serving as Pastor and qualified under Part II, Chapter IV, Section II, item 8-a, page 36. Baptism is usually administered to candidates for church membership who have not been baptized as infants.

SERVICE OF BAPTISM

The persons to be received on confession of their faith may be baptized according to one of the historic modes.

Since this is one of the Sacraments of the Church, thorough preparation should be made for the service. Inadequate preparation may result in humiliating experiences. The baptismal font, with its octagon shape signifying the new life into which the candidate enters,

lends convenience and symbolic meaning to the service. In the administration by immersion, the proper temperature of water, flowers surrounding the baptism, appropriate music, and careful instruction of the candidates, are important items to insure a beautiful administration of the ordinance.

During the singing of a suitable hymn the candidates present themselves.

The Minister should then read from these Scriptures or other suitable lessons:

"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Amen (Matt. 28:16-20).

Mark 16:15; Acts 10:44-48; Acts 2:37-40; Rom. 6:1-11.

An appropriate prayer should then be offered.

The Minister shall proceed to administer the ordinance, saying:

N_____ In obedience to the command of my Lord and Master, and upon the confession of thy faith, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The services will then proceed as usual, or close with suitable exercises and benediction.

ALTERNATE SERVICE

The Minister, or someone who is appointed, may read the Scripture. It is often the custom to read an additional passage as each candidate appears. (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:37-40; Acts 10:44-48; Romans 6:1-11; John 3:3-6; Colossians 2:12 and 3:1-3; Matthew 3:1, 2, 5, 6, 13-17; Galatians 3:26, 27.)

The Minister shall then say to the persons to be baptized:

Dearly beloved, who are come hither desiring to be baptized, you are now in the presence of God and this congregation faithfully to promise by answering the following questions:

- (1) Do you receive and profess the Christian faith, and in this faith do you desire to be baptized?
- (2) Do you confess your sins, and turn from them in sorrow, and put your trust in Jesus Christ; and do you promise in his strength to lead a sober, righteous, and godly life?

N_____ In obedience to the Great Commission of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and upon profession of your faith in Him, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Chapter III

ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The congregation or its Board of Deacons usually determine when the Lord's Supper shall be observed. Most congregations observe this practice bi-monthly or quarterly and on such special days as World-wide Communion Sunday (first Sunday in October) and Maundy Thursday (Thursday before Easter Sunday).

The Service of Communion is conducted by an ordained Minister of the Gospel or a Licentiate serving as Pastor and qualified under Part II, Chapter IV, Section II, item 8-a, page 36, and usually preceded by an appropriate service of worship and a brief communion address.

During the singing of the communion hymn the Deacons of the congregation should be invited forward to assist in the administration of the supper.

The elements may be taken when served, or at a sign given by the Minister, the congregation may partake in unison.

All followers of Christ should be invited to the Lord's Supper whether members of the local church or some other church.

SERVICE OF COMMUNION

Invitation:

Ye who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways; draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort.

(The Words of Institution may be used if desired.)

Let us reverently attend to the Words of the Institution of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, as they are delivered by the Apostle Paul: "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup,

when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." (I Cor. 11:23-26)

Prayer of Confession

Almighty Father, Lord of heaven and earth, we confess that we have sinned against thee in thought, word, and deed. Have mercy upon us, O Lord; have mercy upon us, after thy great goodness; according to the multitude of thy mercies, put away our offenses, and cleanse us from our sins. Amen.

Prayer of Consecration

O thou who hast consecrated for us a new and living Way, even Jesus Christ our Lord, grant unto us who are here met, so to partake of this bread and this cup that our hearts and lives may be truly yielded to the sway of his spirit. And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto thee. Now as we commemorate his last supper with his disciples, and his offering of himself in the sacrifice of the cross, we humbly beseech thee to grant thy Holy Spirit, and to sanctify this bread and wine, that they may become unto us symbols of the body that was broken and of the blood that was shed for us. May they beget in us penitent hearts and a quickened faith, and may we receive this holy Sacrament to our comfort; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Giving of the Bread

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you. The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said: Take, eat; this is

my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me.

(After serving the congregation the Deacons are then served by the Minister.)

The Cup of Remembrance

He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, Drink ye, all of it.

Prayer of Aspiration

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray for the great Church Universal, where it is in error may it be corrected; where it is in want may it be provided for; where it is divided, may it be reunited. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatever else may hinder us from godly union and concord. Enlighten all the enemies of Christ and draw to his service every power that is exalted against him. ..Restore the desolations of former days; rejoice the wilderness with beauty; and make glad the city with thy Law. We yield unto thee most hearty thanks for the grace and virtue declared in all thy saints, who have been chosen vessels of thy favor, and the lights of the world in their several generations. ..Especially would we remember our friend and kindred of this place of prayer. By thy providence give us the will to follow the example of their faith. Manifest thy will, Almighty Father, in the brotherhood of man, and establish a lasting and universal peace; through the victory of Christ our Lord. Amen.

An offering for the aged servants of our church (Ministerial Relief) is received by many churches.

Hymn of Dedication.

Benediction.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

A BRIEF ORDER OF COMMUNION

(Adapted for Private Use)

The following brief order of Communion is suggested for use in the home of the sick or disabled who cannot attend the services of the church. The Minister will find it convenient to own a personal communion set especially made for this purpose.

Dearly beloved, the elements of the Lord's Table have been given us to beget in us a deepened faith and to draw us closer to our Savior. This remembrance has been of great benefit in bringing support and nourishment to our souls. As we partake together we are joined in spirit with the great company of believers who look to Christ for forgiveness and salvation. With hearts so prepared let us draw near in faith to receive these gifts.

Let us pray.

Eternal God our Heavenly Father, thou hast ever been mindful of the needs of thy servants. Thy hand doth support and sustain us all the day. We render our praise and thanksgiving for the great gift of thy Son Jesus Christ who has suffered the death of the cross that we might live. These gifts of bread and wine remind us of his sacrifice and we receive them with a prayer for our forgiveness. Consecrate them to their intended use and us into a fuller service in Christ's name. Amen.

Serving of the Bread.

Our Savior took bread and gave it to his disciples, as I ministering in his name, give it unto you, saying, Take, eat; this is my body, broken for you; this do in remembrance of me.

Serving of the Cup

After the same manner our Savior took the cup, and having given thanks, as hath been done in his name, he gave it to his disciples, saying, This is the New Testament in my blood. Drink ye, all of it.

Let us pray.

We thank thee Lord that we may be numbered amongst thy servants. Unite us in love with those who have kept the faith in other days and are now eternally with thee. So endow us with the gifts of thy Spirit that all our days may be marked with love and service. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Benediction.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.

Chapter IV

CONSECRATION OF CHILDREN

While the consecration of children may be performed at home, it is more suitable that the children be brought to the church, and publicly dedicated at the altar of God by an ordained Minister of the Gospel or a Licentiate serving as Pastor and qualified under Part II, Chapter IV, Section II, item 8-a, page 36.

If either parent is a professing Christian the right of the child to such a service is usually conceded. It is the custom of many churches to receive for consecration infants whose parents will assent to the covenant contained in the service.

When a child is consecrated the parents publicly dedicate the child to God. They take vows to give the child Christian training. They promise to live as

Christians before him and to teach him the importance of living the good life; so that when he reaches the age of understanding he will desire to accept Christ for himself.

The terms "christen," "baptize," or "dedicate" may be used in place of "consecrate." The interpretation usually given to this service by our fellowship is that this consecration is a covenant between the church and the parents to rear the child in the Christian faith. At the age of discretion when the child professes Christ and joins the Church he confirms the faith expressed by his parents at the same time of consecration. Consecration of the candidate may be accepted as his baptism according to his personal convictions.

SERVICE OF CONSECRATION

The parents standing with the child, either in the home or before the congregation, the Minister may read one or more of the following selections of Scripture: I Samuel 1:21-28; Luke 2:25-30; Matthew 19:13; Mark 10:14-16.

Beloved Friends: In presenting this child for consecration to God, we recognize that you are moved by that impulse of parental love, which prompts to all sacrifices, and promotes all efforts to bring comfort and blessings to the objects of its faithful care. You are anxious that your child may increase not only in strength and knowledge, but also in the fear and favor of God. To this end it is needful that you exercise watchful oversight upon every influence that may affect his (or her) youthful mind.

Will you therefore endeavor to bring up this child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; will you

teach him from his earliest years to engage in daily prayer, and will you employ every effort to bring him to a saving knowledge of the truth in Jesus Christ our Lord?

Answer—I will.

Will you be careful in your conduct to live as Christian believers, and in wholesome example to this child?

Answer—I will.

Will you abound in prayer for this child and seek to restrain him from all evil habits and associates, and to turn his mind to the Holy Scriptures and his feet to the House of God?

Answer—I will.

Then the Minister shall read this Scripture:

Then were there brought unto him little children that he should put his hands on them and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. — Matt. 19:13.

But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them. — Mark 10:15-16.

Then the Minister shall take the child, or place his hand upon his head, and say:

Name this child.

Then naming it after them he shall say:

I consecrate thee to the Lord, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

COVENANT OF THE CHURCH (Congregation Standing)

I, on behalf of the members of this church of

Christ, do join with you in the covenant which you make this day in behalf of this child. We recognize our relation to him, as in a peculiar sense the child of the Church, desiring with you to watch over him, and to care for all his spiritual interests, laboring and praying for his salvation, that he may early become the subject of the inward grace whose outward sign he now receives.

(Congregation may be seated)

Let us pray:

Receive, O Lord, we beseech Thee, this child, (these children), whom we consecrate to Thee and to Thy service forever. Lead him, we pray Thee, early to an understanding of Thy ways, and to a perfect trust in Christ, his Savior. Preserve him from the perils of doubt and the temptations of sin, and so replenish him with the gift of Thy heavenly grace that he may serve Thee with a faithful heart all the time that Thou grantest him to live. And so sanctify, we beseech Thee, these Thy servants, that they may direct their household in the fear of the Lord. Purify them so wholly in thought and word and deed, that the family may be united to Christ in faith and love, and having walked in Thy sight on the earth, be finally admitted, parents and children together to the greater family of the redeemed in Heaven, there to praise Thee, world without end. Amen.

Then the Minister shall add this benediction:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

(A suitable certificate of Baptism may be given)

Chapter V

ORDINATION OF DEACONS

After due election and at the appointed time, the person to be ordained as Deacon shall take his place in front of the altar, and the ordained Minister of the Gospel officiating shall say:

Brother _____ has been duly chosen by a vote of this church to the office of Deacon, and it now becomes our duty to set him apart thereto by prayer and the imposition of hands.

The following passages of Scripture shall be read:

And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch; whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. Acts 6:5-6.

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. I Tim. 3:8-13.

After the reading of the Scripture the Minister shall address the candidate, saying:

My Brother: You have been called to a very honorable and responsible office in the Church of God; and it now devolves on me to propound to you, in the presence of this congregation, the following questions:

- (1) Do you believe the Holy Scriptures to be the Word of inspiration, and a sufficient rule of faith and practice?
- (2) Do you promise to adhere faithfully to the Principles and Government of the Congregational Christian Churches?
- (3) Do you promise to discharge the duties of a Deacon to this congregation to the best of your ability?

Prayer.

After which the officiating Minister, the candidate kneeling, shall lay his hands upon the head of the chosen person and utter words to the following purpose:

My Brother, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by authority vested in the Church, I ordain you to the office of Deacon in this congregation. and may the Holy Spirit enable you to discharge the duties of your office. Amen.

Chapter VI

LICENSURE OF CANDIDATES

The President of the Conference, or a Minister appointed by him, shall license the candidate for licensure according to the service in "A Handbook of Standards, Procedures and Services," authorized by the Department of the Ministry of the Congregational

Christian Churches, or in the following manner:

Hymn.

Scripture.

Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of another man's sins; keep thyself pure. (I Tim 5:22.)

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus. (II Tim. 1:13.)

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. (II Tim. 2:2.)

Addressing the candidate, the President shall say:

My brother: By order of _____ Conference, it devolves upon me to license you as a probationer to preach the Gospel, and to administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as provided for and authorized in Chapter IV, Section II, page 36, paragraph 8-a, "Rights and Privileges of Licentiates." That you may witness the same before these present, I propound to you the following questions:

- (1) Do you believe the Holy Scriptures to be the Word of inspiration, and a sufficient rule of faith and practice? (II Tim. 3:16.)
- (2) Will you faithfully adhere to the Principles and Government of the Congregational Christian Churches? (II Tim. 1:13.)
- (3) Will you labor zealously, through the grace given you, to promote the peace and unity of the Church? (Eph. 4:3; Heb. 12:14, 15.)

- (4) Do you promise to submit to the decisions of the Conference to which you may belong, and to subject yourself to the brethren in the Lord? (I Peter 5:5.)

Prayer.

After prayer the President shall address the candidate in the following manner:

My Brother: In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by authority vested in the Church, we license you to preach the Gospel of the Son of God wherever Providence may call you; and may the grace of God sustain you, and the Holy Spirit enlighten your mind. Amen.

This proceeding shall be duly recorded, and a certificate shall be given to the Licentiate, signed by the President and Secretary of the Conference, to the following effect:

CERTIFICATE OF LICENSURE

This will certify that _____, a member of the Congregational Christian Church at _____, _____ County, State of _____, has been carefully examined as required by the Government of the Congregational Christian Churches, and has given satisfaction, and is licensed* as a probationer to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, wherever the providence of God may call him, and to administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as provided for and authorized in Chapter IV, Section II, page 36, 8-a.

Done by order of the _____ Conference,
this _____ day of _____, 19____.

_____, President
_____, Secretary

*Subject to annual renewal.

Chapter VII

ORDINATION OF MINISTERS

Ordination should take place during the session of Conference, or at such time and place as Conference may designate, the Conference sitting as an ecclesiastical council. A sermon or address on the office of the ministry could be delivered. Two Ordained Ministers in Full and Regular Standing shall then conduct the candidate to the altar during the singing of a suitable hymn.

The service of Ordination found in "A Handbook of Standards, Procedures and Services," authorized by the Department of the Ministry of the Congregational Christian Churches, may be used if desired.

Hymn.

The one to whom the part is assigned shall address the Chairman of the Presbytery and say:

Reverend Brother in Christ, we present to you after due examination by the proper committee, under authority of the _____ Conference, this Brother approved by said Conference to be ordained to the office of the Christian Ministry.

The Chairman of the Presbytery shall read from these Scriptures:

Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life; and who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. (II Cor. 2:14-17.)

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to-wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (II Cor. 5:18-20.)

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matt. 28:16-20.)

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Eph. 4:7-13.)

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. (I Tim. 4:14-16.)

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus . . . endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (II Tim. 2:1-3, 15.)

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. (II Tim. 4:1-2.)

My Brother: From all these Scriptures you learn to how high a dignity, and to how weighty an office and charge you are called. Forasmuch then as your office and work is of great difficulty, and you are not able of yourself faithfully to fulfill it, so as to be well pleasing to God and to the edification of the Church, we exhort you to put your trust in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is able to succor you. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. And he who has promised to be with us always, even unto the end of the world, will uphold and prosper you in that whereunto he has sent you.

That all here present may be assured of your purpose, we are required to propound to you the following questions:

- (1) Do you believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God given by inspiration for our guidance, a sufficient rule of faith and practice? (II Tim. 3:16.)

- (2) Do you promise to adhere strictly and faithfully to the Principles and Government of the Congregational Christian Churches? (II Tim. 1:13.)
- (3) Do you promise, to the best of your ability, through grace, to discharge the duties of an Ordained Minister in full and regular standing as set forth in the Holy Scriptures and the Government of this Church? (Acts 20:28; I Cor. 2:2; II Cor. 4:5.)
- (4) Have you been actuated, as far as you know your own heart, in seeking this holy office, by love to God and a sincere desire to spread the Gospel of His Son among men? (I Cor. 2:2; II Cor. 4:5.)
- (5) Do you promise to obey the decisions of the Conference and to submit yourself to the brethren in the Lord?

Prayer.

The Presbytery shall then lay their hands (I Tim. 4:14) upon the head of the candidate kneeling before them, and one of them shall say to the following effect:

My Brother: In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by authority vested in the Church, we do ordain you to the office of an Ordained Minister in Full and Regular Standing (Titus 1:5) (Conference Pastor) and do clothe you with power to take part in this ministry with us (Acts 1:25). And may the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you (II Cor. 13:14), and the peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your heart and mind, through Jesus Christ. Amen. (Phil. 4:7.)

The newly ordained Minister in Full and Regular Standing (or Conference Pastor) arises. A charge shall then be given in the name of God to the newly ordained Minister (II Tim. 2:1, 2) by one of the officiating Ordained Ministers.

Note regarding Conference Pastors—to be read to the candidate.

(The rights and privileges of a Conference Pastor are the same as those of an Ordained Minister in Full and Regular Standing, but are limited to the bounds of the Conference ordaining him, and such ordination is subject to renewal annually by the Conference.)

The Charge.

At the conclusion of the charge the Holy Bible shall be presented (John 5:39).

Presentation of the Holy Bible.

All the Ordained Ministers present shall then give the right hand of fellowship (Gal. 2:9).

Right Hand of Fellowship.

The following is the form of the certificate which ought to be given to the newly ordained Minister at the time of the presentation of the Holy Bible. (A special form is provided for Conference Pastors.)

CERTIFICATE OF ORDINATION

We, the undersigned officers and Presbytery of Ordination, appointed by the Conference, do hereby certify that Brother _____, having proved his gifts as a Licentiate, having been recommended by the churches to which he has ministered, and having passed a satisfactory examination, as required by the Government of the Congregational Christian Churches, has been this day

set apart and ordained to the office of an Ordained Minister in Full and Regular Standing, by prayer and the imposition of hands, and is hereby authorized to administer the ordinances of the Church and to solemnize the rites of matrimony.

Signed by order of the _____ Conference, held
at _____, in the county of _____,
and state of _____, on this the _____
day of _____, 19____.

Place and Date of Ordination Service:

Presbytery -----

Chapter VIII

INSTALLATION OF A PASTOR

The installation services may be made an occasion of great value to the church and the cause of Christ. The sermon should precede the installation ceremonies. The persons to participate in the installation services should be agreed upon by the church and the Minister to be installed. It is well for the President of the Conference to preside at the installation service.

The Service of Installation outlined in "A Handbook of Standards, Procedures and Services," authorized by the Department of the Ministry of the Congregational Christian Churches, may be used, or the following:

After the introductory services and the sermon the installation ceremonies shall be as follows:

Hymn.

Scripture Reading.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth! Thy watchman shall lift up the voice: with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem: the Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your reward. Behold my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. (Isa. 52:7-13).

But thou, O Man of God . . . follow righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and has professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in his times he shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings

and the Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen. (1 Tim. 6:11-16).

Prayer.

At the close of the singing of a hymn, the Minister to be installed shall stand before the altar.

Hymn.

After which the officiating Minister shall say:

Reverend Brother: You have been called to the oversight of this church and have signified your acceptance of the call. It is, therefore, obligatory upon you to labor for the edification of the Church and the upbuilding of the Redeemer's Kingdom while this relation shall continue.

To the Church:

Does this church now renew the call and promise to discharge its duties to the Pastor? If so, the members may signify their purpose by rising.

To the Minister:

Do you accept this call and declare your willingness to discharge the duties of a faithful Pastor?

Prayer.

The address of welcome may be by one person or separate parts may be assigned to different persons.

Address of Welcome:

(1) On the part of the ministry, (2) on the part of the church, and (3) on the part of the community.

Response by the Pastor Installed.

During the singing of a hymn the right hand of fellowship shall be given to the new Pastor by the Ministers, church officials and Christians generally.
Benediction by the Pastor.

Chapter IX

LAYING OF THE CORNERSTONE

A platform should be erected and all rubbish removed from the place before the assembling of the congregation.

The Minister shall say:

Beloved Brethren: In ancient time God commanded his servant Moses to set up the tabernacle in the wilderness, and bestowed His blessings upon Solomon the king in erecting the Temple at Zion, whither tribes came up to worship. In like manner He has moved upon hearts to erect a sanctuary, where in years to come you and yours may assemble for prayer and praise. We have met together at this time to lay the cornerstone with proper religious services.

Hymn—"Holy, Holy, Holy."

Scripture Lesson—Ps. 28:16; Ezra 3:10-13; Ps. 132; I Cor. 3:9-23.

Prayer—There should be a prayer of thanksgiving and for protection of the workmen who shall be engaged in the further work of the building and for the church in her part of the prosecution of the building work.

Hymn—"I Love Thy Kingdom Lord."

"The Church's One Foundation."

Address or Sermon.

Then the Minister, standing by the stone, shall

exhibit the box to be deposited, and read the list of contents.

The Minister, assisted by the builder, shall deposit the box, and adjust the stone to its resting place.

This done, the Minister shall strike the stone thrice with a trowel or hammer and say:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we lay this cornerstone in the foundation of a house to be erected and dedicated for the worship of God; and for a spiritual refuge and home to all faithful Christians, who will labor with us, according to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, in extending the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Minister and People: In loving memory of those who have gone from us; whose hearts and hands have served in this church; with deep gratitude for all whose faith and consecrated gifts make this house possible; for all who may share this spiritual adventure; and with high hopes for all who shall worship in this house in the years to come, we lay this cornerstone in the name of Almighty God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—unto the ages of ages, world without end. Amen.

Hymn.

Benediction.

Chapter X

THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH

The general order of service for the dedication and consecration of a church or chapel may be as follows:

Organ Prelude.

The people having assembled, the Ministers taking part in the dedication shall enter at the door, where they will be met by the trustees and officers of the church and shall proceed down the aisle, the Minister leading—the presiding Minister may read or recite Psalm 23 or 84.

Responsive Service (people standing):

Minister: Surely the Lord is in this place.

Congregation: This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

Minister: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.

Congregation: And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Invocation and the Lord's Prayer.

Scripture Lesson—I Chronicles 29:1-20; II Chronicles 6; I Cor. 3; Ps. 122.

Offering.

Burning of notes.

The Chairman of the Building Committee shall hand the keys of the church to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, saying: I hereby transfer to you as Chairman of the Board of Trustees, the keys of this completed building.

The Chairman of the Board of Trustees, accepting the keys, shall express appreciation for the services of the Building Committee and congratulate them upon the completion of their work and say: I accept these keys in behalf of the church.

Greetings by visiting Ministers and former Pastors.

Dedication Sermon.

Prayer—Solomon's Prayer. II Chron. 6:12-21; I Kings 8:22-30, 54-60.

Litany of Dedication:

Minister: To the glory of God, our Father, by whose favor we have built this house; to the honor of Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Lord and Savior; to the praise of the Holy Spirit, source of life and light;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: For comfort to those who mourn; for strength to those who are tempted; for help in right living;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: To the memory of our beloved dead, to the gentle and true of former times, to all who have unloosed the bonds of ignorance and wrong;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: To the welfare of the living; to those whose ways are good and those whose ways are evil; to the strong souls that stoop to share the burdens of their fellows; to the weak and defenseless; to the dark mind, the tempted heart, the life weary and heavy-laden, and to all human needs;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: To the proclamation of the truth that sets men free, to the liberty of the sons of God; to reverence for all worth of the past; and to the eager acceptance of all good which the future may unfold;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: For the sanctification of the family; for the guidance of childhood; for the salvation of men;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister: For bringing to men a vision of the Kingdom of our God; for missionary endeavor at home and abroad; for the winning of the world to Christ;

Congregation: We dedicate this house.

Minister and Congregation: As a tribute of gratitude and love, a free-will offering of thanksgiving and praise, from those who have tasted the cup of thy salvation, and experienced the riches of thy grace; we the members and friends of _____ Congregational Christian Church, of the _____ Conference, now consecrating ourselves anew, dedicate this entire building in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Doxology by choir and congregation.

Benediction.

Chapter XI

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

Minister: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this company, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony; which is an honorable estate, instituted of God, and, therefore, is not by any to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly; but reverently, discreetly, soberly, and in the fear of God. Into this holy estate these two persons present come now to be joined.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands,

as it is fit in the Lord, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it. For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh. Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Then shall the Minister say unto the man:

N_____ will thou have this Woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor, and keep her in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?

The man shall answer: I will.

Then shall the Minister say unto the woman:

N_____ will thou have this Man to be thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love him, honor, and keep him in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?

The woman shall answer: I will.

Then shall the Minister say:

Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?

The father (or some other designated person):

I do.

Then shall they give their troth to each other in this manner. The Minister, receiving the woman at her father's or friend's hands, shall cause the man with his right hand to take the woman by her right hand, and to say after him as follows:

I, _____, take thee, _____, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth.

Then shall the woman likewise say after the Minister:

I, _____, take thee, _____, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth.

The Minister, receiving the ring, shall say:

This ring, given and taken, is a symbol of nuptial love. It is pure, and under fiery trial shines with a richer luster. Its form, being a circle, is without end. It is therefore a fitting seal to your marriage vows and the sign to you of an endless bond.

The Minister shall deliver the ring to the man, who shall put it on the fourth finger of the left hand of the woman. The man, holding it there, shall repeat after the Minister:

With this ring I thee wed, I give thee my love, and plight thee my troth, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(If the woman desires to give a ring to the man, the Minister shall receive it and deliver it to the woman, who shall put it on the fourth finger of the left hand of the man. The woman, holding it there, shall repeat after the Minister:

With this ring I thee wed, I give thee my love, and plight thee my troth, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.)

Then shall the Minister join their right hands together and say:

Forasmuch as _____ and _____ have consented together in holy matrimony, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and therefore have given and pledged their troth, each to the other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving a ring (or rings) and by joining their right hands; therefore, as a Minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and with the authority conferred upon me by this Commonwealth (or State) I pronounce that they are husband and wife.

Then shall the Minister offer this prayer:

O Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life, send thy blessing upon these thy servants, this man and this woman, whom we bless in thy name. Give them bounteously of thy grace that they may surely keep the vows which they have made and this covenant between them. Grant that they may ever remain in perfect love and loyalty together and live according to thy will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then shall the Minister pronounce a benediction. He may use these words:

The Lord bless, preserve and keep you; the Lord mercifully with his favor look upon you, and fill you will all spiritual benediction and grace; that ye may live together in this life, that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting. Amen.

Chapter XII

THE FUNERAL SERVICE

The funeral service should be one of dignity, solemnity, and helpfulness, a memorial to the deceased, a comfort and inspiration to the living.

It is well, after the people have assembled and the family is seated, to observe a moment of quiet meditation.

During the processional and recessional there may be soft music.

If the service is to be conducted in the home, at the appointed hour when all is ready the undertaker so informs the Minister. He and those assisting him in song, or otherwise, take their places near the casket, but in a position where they may be heard throughout the assembly. The Minister then proceeds with the order of service (the same as a church funeral).

Should the funeral be in the church, the relatives, close friends and the pallbearers (all who have a part in the funeral other than those responsible for the music) meet at the home of the deceased at an earlier hour and go in procession to the church. If desired by the family, a word of prayer is offered before the body is removed from the home.

In the church, other friends are assembled and soft music, favorite hymns of the family and the de-

ceased, may be played. As the procession enters the church, led by the Minister, the audience rises. When all are in place, everyone is seated except the Minister.

On reaching the cemetery, the Minister leads the procession to the place for burial. Special seating arrangements should have been made for the family, or they may remain in the car near the grave if desired.

There is a wealth of material for use at funerals available to all Ministers. And since funeral arrangements and customs vary in different communities, and inasmuch as the circumstances of the service will dictate their character, the following orders of service are merely suggestive:

Scriptural sentences.

Hymn (sung or read).

Scripture Readings.

Prayer.

Obituary and remarks (can be omitted).

Hymn (sung or read).

Benediction.

Or, especially if more than one Minister is participating:

Scriptural sentences.

Hymn (sung or read).

Old Testament Scriptures.

Prayer of Faith.

Hymn or Solo (sung or read).

New Testament Scriptures.

Prayer of Comfort.

Obituary and Remarks (can be omitted).

Hymn (sung or read).

Benediction.

A BRIEF COMMITTAL

Hear the comfortable words of Holy Scripture. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. I am the resurrection and the life. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

(Prayer may be offered.)

Cherish memories that are forever sacred;

Sustained by a faith that is stronger than death;

And comforted by the hope of a life that shall endless be,

We commit to the earth all that is mortal of this our friend.

(Here flowers can be placed upon the casket.)

As we have borne the image of the earthy,

So shall we bear the image of the heavenly.

Benediction.

A GENERAL FUNERAL SERVICE

Opening Sentences.

Hymn.

Prayer.

Scriptures (selected).

Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive

you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.
— John 14:1-3.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters; he restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. — Psalm 23.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood. So, teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. O satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us: yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it. — Selections from Psalm 90.

I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my spirit rejoices. My flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave, neither wilt thou suffer thy godly one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.
— Psalms 16:8-11; 17:15.

Address.

Hymn.

Benediction:

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

ALTERNATE SERVICE

Ascending to the pulpit, or standing at the altar, the Minister shall read the following lesson, or portions of it, with one or more of the supplementary lessons.

Lesson:

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead? and why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt

good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

But some will say, how are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool! that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. How be it, that was not first which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord of heaven. As is the earthy, such are they that are earthy; and as is heavenly, such are they that are heavenly. And as we have born the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality; then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. — I Cor. 15:20-58.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; or it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Return, O Lord, how long, and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea the work of our hands establish thou it. — Psalm 90.

For other Scriptures see I Thes. 4:13-18; Ecc. 12:1-7; Rev. 7:9-17.

Hymn.

Prayer.

Sermon or address.

Hymn.

Committal service.

The pall-bearers selected shall then bear the body to the grave, the Minister and undertaker going before it, and the family and friends following in the rear. On arriving at the grave, after the body is lowered, the Minister, taking his position at the head of the grave shall say:

Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. They are like grass that groweth up; in the morning it flourisheth; in the evening it is cut down and withereth. For here have we no continuing city.

Lord, make me to know mine end and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Behold thou hast made my days as a handbreadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee; verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.

Continuing, the Minister shall say:

Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, in his wise providence, to take out of this earthy tabernacle the soul that inhabited it, we therefore commit the decaying remains to their kindred element; earth to earth; ashes to ashes; dust to dust; looking for the general resurrection, through our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose coming to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in him shall be made like unto His own glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto himself.

Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Benediction:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you . Amen.

The grave may then be closed by the undertaker and his assistants, and the company may retire.

ALTERNATE COMMITTAL SERVICE

Minister: Hear the words of our Savior: Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. The eternal is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Prayer.

Committal by Minister: And now, dear friends, we return to our Heavenly Father the body of the one we loved, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, thankful for his priceless gift of Christ our Savior, who abolishes death in the glorious hope of eternal life. The dust return to the earth as it was, but the spirit returns to God who gave it.

Or

“And now very tenderly and lovingly we commit the mortal part of the one we have loved (or substitute the name) to the elements from which it came, confident that his (her) soul hath gone on in the continuing fellowship of God whose son (daughter) he (she) is.”

Prayer.

Benediction: May God's peace, the peace that passeth all understanding, be with you for evermore. Amen.

